



Introduction

MARGARET A. CHAPLAN

ABOUT A DECADE has elapsed since the recent period of union organizing in libraries began. During that time, the increasing pace of unionization was matched by growing interest, concern, apprehension, or curiosity about collective bargaining on the part of persons involved with the library profession. What everyone wanted to know was exactly *what* was happening *where*, and what the issues and problems were. Perhaps enough time has passed to enable us to draw reasonable conclusions from our experience and to propose some responses to those questions.

This issue is intended as a state-of-the-art review of organizing and collective bargaining in libraries. The topics of the papers were selected in order to provide an overview of events in the field of library organizing and bargaining, and also to present discussions of what our experience has revealed to be the principal issues that have emerged. It is hoped that the information presented here will aid the reader in making informed decisions and formulating knowledgeable opinions about collective bargaining in libraries.

The first section of the issue is concerned with the organizing process, and it begins with a history of organizing in libraries. How librarians perceive the advantages and disadvantages of unions, how they think of themselves as professionals and of unions' ability to represent professional interests, and their assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of independent unions versus affiliation with an established labor organization are, collectively or individually, significant factors in the success or failure of organizing campaigns. The rest of the papers in this section discuss these variables.

Biblo traces the history of unionization in academic, public, school, and special libraries. Oberg, Blackburn, and Dible assess the financial, social and psychological, and political advantages and disadvantages

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of unions both for the individual and the organization. Schlachter examines several questions regarding the appropriateness of collective bargaining by professionals and the role of employee organizations in representing professional interests. Krislov and Channing discuss the strengths and weaknesses of independent unions, as well as the reasons for their growth. They also examine the potential of various independent unions and employee associations to represent librarians' interests.

The second section includes two papers discussing the effects of collective bargaining. The way in which bargaining changes the relationship between the employees and the organization is bargaining's most immediate effect from the employee's perspective. The paper by Chamot describes the changes in employee status, circumstances, and procedures that entering into a collective bargaining agreement may bring about.

Bargaining also brings changes in library management and operations. Moss's paper points out that the provisions of bargaining laws, the composition of the bargaining unit, the scope of bargaining, and the possibility of strikes all have an impact on library operations, as well as on budgets and the nature of the personnel function. One part of the personnel function in agencies of government is the administration of civil service systems. Civil service regulations often cover job classifications, pay scales, promotions, job assignments, holidays, and many other subjects that are often also included in collective bargaining agreements. Whether civil service systems and collective bargaining can, or should, be reconciled is a question which needs to be examined. Unfortunately, the paper discussing this topic was not submitted for publication.

The appendices present a chronology of job actions in all types of libraries since 1965 and selections from two collective bargaining contracts—one from a public library and one from an academic library.

To those familiar with the subject of collective bargaining, it may seem as if important topics have been omitted. In order to avoid duplicating the papers presented at the twentieth annual Allerton Park Institute (which was also concerned with collective bargaining in libraries), discussions of the extent of unionization in libraries, the legal aspects of organizing and bargaining, and case studies of the implications of bargaining have been omitted. Since the proceedings of the conference appeared less than one year ago, it seemed unnecessary to repeat this information. I have therefore organized an issue

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that can be comprehensive and informative in itself as well as one that can serve as a supplement to the institute proceedings.

Habitual readers of *Library Trends* undoubtedly will notice that the customary paper describing the international situation has also been omitted. This, too, was deliberate. The historical, legal, and political background of bargaining in libraries outside of the United States is very different from ours. Although all unionized librarians bargain about wages and working conditions, the framework within which such bargaining takes place varies considerably. One paper could not have done justice to such a complicated subject.

Originally this issue was to contain a paper on women in labor unions. The paper was not submitted, but I think the topic has special meaning for librarians and deserves further investigation. In the opinion of some people, labor unions have a spotty record in their support of women's issues, and critics can point to a rather poor record of moving women into leadership positions in unions. These problems were perceived to be acute enough by women union members to spur them to form the Coalition of Labor Union Women in an effort to improve their situation. Since most librarians are women, most of the potential members of library unions are women. It is, therefore, important that they inform themselves about what unions can do and have done for women.

All of the papers indicate, explicitly or implicitly, further research that needs to be done. We need better data on the extent of union membership in libraries. We also need measurements of the effect of collective bargaining. Third, we need to make a closer examination of the role of the ALA; why didn't it follow the model of organizations like the NEA and represent librarians in collective bargaining? Both Biblo and Krislov and Channing remark on the splintering of the profession caused by librarians being represented by so many different organizations—what effect will this have? If librarians turn increasingly toward unions to represent their professional interests, will the ALA fade away? We also need to know what happens to librarians who are included in larger bargaining units with other professionals. Are they ignored or are their particular demands met? Furthermore, what effect does the present poor job market have on collective bargaining in libraries? As Oberg, Blackburn and Dible point out, another area of needed research is that of cost-benefit analyses of collective bargaining in libraries. Obviously, even though ten years have gone by, we have just begun to examine the roles of employee organizations and collective bargaining in libraries.

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